

The Lovell Beach House  
1242 West Ocean Front  
Newport Beach  
Orange County  
California

HABS No. CA-1986

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30-NEWBE,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

The Lovell Beach House

HABS No. CA-1986

Location: 1242 W. Ocean Front  
Newport Beach  
Orange County  
California

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Philip M. and Leah Lovell  
1242 W. Ocean Front  
Newport Beach, California 92660 (as of 1968)

Present Use: Dwelling

Statement  
of Significance: The Lovell Beach House is generally considered one of  
the greatest works of pioneering modern architect,  
R. M. Schindler. It demonstrates an early use of  
concrete which predates and predicts the post-war  
Brutalist style, in which concrete is left unsurfaced,  
and structure is distinct from enclosure.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1926
2. Architect: R. M. Schindler (see Part III: Sources of  
information)
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Lovells
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: No information gathered
5. Original plans and construction: At the Schindler Collection,  
Department of Art, University of California, Santa Barbara.  
Also in this collection are construction photographs. In the  
words of the architect:

The house is elevated above the beach on columns,  
the projections of five visible reinforced  
concrete frames forming an organic skeleton; the  
building is suspended by means of iron rods on  
five equal concrete frames; wood floors, plaster  
walls, sliding glass curtains.

6. Alterations and additions: The sleeping porch was originally open; two years after construction, R. M. Schindler enclosed it, using doors from bedrooms to sleeping porch for the enclosing screens and providing new bedroom doors. The stairway from the kitchen to ground level was removed in 1961 when the adjacent lot, owned by the Lovells, was sold; the stairway and landing extended over the lot line. Numerous repairs have been made, none of which have altered the plan or spaces.

Prepared by: Esther McCoy  
July 1968

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: A precursor of post-war Brutalism; one of the major designs by architect Schindler. Unsurfaced concrete construction, poured-in-place, and open planning are important features.

Condition of fabric: Deteriorating, although the structural components are in good shape. Wind and salt air from the ocean have begun to take their toll.

- B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 58'-8" x 27'-8"
2. Foundations: Reinforced concrete
3. Walls: Between the reinforced concrete structural frames, the walls are frame covered with stucco
4. Structural system: Five reinforced, poured-in-place concrete cradles
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, etc.: Platform on west front; stairs branch from it at right angles to entry doors at upper level. The right-hand stairs are the major ones, and have treads that are 1'-10" wide. These lead to the living area. The left-hand stairs, with treads 11" wide, lead to the kitchen area. Originally, a large terrace wrapped around the house to the east. This was removed in the 1960s. There were also sleeping porches on the second floor on the west front. These were enclosed c. 1928 by the original architect. There is a sun porch on the north end of the roof.

6. Chimneys: There is one chimney on the east wall in the second bay from the south. It is of concrete with a stucco finish.
7. Openings:
  - A. Doorways: The entry door is at the top of the right-hand stairs.
  - B. Windows: Windows are varied, composed of multi-light panels of various sizes.
8. Roof: The roof has a slight slope, and is covered with tar paper.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans
  - A. Ground floor: There is a garage at the north end of the house. The south end is open, and was originally a play area. A shower stall is in the center.
  - B. First floor: Living/dining area contained in the three southern bays. The northern bay contains the kitchen and service areas.
  - C. Second floor: Bedrooms are contained in each of the four bays along the west front. Originally, each of the four rooms had its own sleeping porch. These were enclosed as part of the rooms c. 1928. Access to the bedrooms is from a balcony overlooking the living/dining areas.
2. Stairway: The stair to the second floor is in the northwest corner of the house. Near it is the stair leading from the second floor to the roof deck.
3. Flooring: 1" board flooring
4. Wall and ceiling finish: 2" frame and stucco walls; 1" board ceilings
5. A. Doorways and doors: Doors are board; those into the bedrooms are double.
6. Decorative features: Lamps and built-in furniture are part of the original design.

- D. Site: The house faces the west, with a small garden to the south (the ocean side).

Prepared by: Robert C. Giebner  
Project Supervisor  
HABS Los Angeles Team  
August 1968

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### A. Primary Sources

R. M. Schindler report to USC Dept. of Architecture and Fine Arts for Directory of Contemporary Architecture, October 1949

Interviews: E. McCoy with Leah and Philip Lovell  
E. McCoy with R. M. Schindler

Original Drawings, Schindler Collection, Dept. of Art, University of California, Santa Barbara  
(Photographs of the house during construction and after completion in same collection)

#### B. Secondary Sources

Architecture, Ambition and Americans, Wayne Andrews, New York, 1947.

"West Coast Architecture: A Romantic Movement Ends," Pacific Spectator, Palo Alto, Winter 1953, pp. 20-30, E. McCoy.

"The California House: How it Started," E. McCoy, Los Angeles Times Home Magazine, July 19, 1953.

"Seven Pioneers Who Showed the Way," E. McCoy, Los Angeles Times Home Magazine, September 9, 1956.

"Four Schindler Houses of the 1920s," E. McCoy, Arts and Architecture, Los Angeles, September 1953, pp. 12-14.

R. M. Schindler," E. McCoy, Arts & Architecture, Los Angeles, May 1954, pp. 12-15.

Roots of California Contemporary Architecture, E. McCoy, catalog for exhibition, Los Angeles Art Commission and the Architectural Panel, 1956.

Five California Architects, E. McCoy, Reinhold, New York, 1960

Rudolph M. Schindler, Hans Hollein, Der Augbau, Vienna, No. 3, 1961

Rudolph M. Schindler, Hans Hollein, Bau, Vienna, No. 4, 1966

A Guide to Architecture in Southern California, Gebhard-Winter, Los Angeles County Museum, 1965

R. M. Schindler, Architect, David Gebhard, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1967.

"Some Notes on Two Works by Schindler," Herman Hertzberger, Domus, Milan, September 1967

"R. M. Schindler," J. B. Bakema, (Dutch) Forum, No. 8, 1960-1961

Amerika, Richard Neutra, Schroll, Vienna, 1930, p. 139